

III. *The necessity for positing the Sangha Jewel as an object of refuge*

The Sangha Jewel is an object of refuge because the Sangha serves as the *resultant* object of refuge of Hearers who have taken their last rebirth in Samsara and who wish to attain Nirvana by depending on a teacher. Furthermore, the Sangha Jewel is also the (*resultant*) object of refuge for those who have the Hearer inclination but who have not entered a path yet and who regard the holy Sangha as supreme.

Thus, the Sangha Jewel is an object of refuge because, of the three Jewels, it is the *main* resultant object of refuge of Hearers and of those who possess the Hearer inclination but who have not entered the path yet.

Maitreya says in his *Uttaratantra (Sublime Continuum)*:

*There being the teacher, the teachings, and the disciples
Leads to respective aspirations towards the three vehicles
And the different activities [of worship].
Therefore, refuge is shown as threefold.*

	CAUSAL REFUGE	MAIN RESULTANT REFUGE
Bodhisattvas / those who have the Mahayana inclination but have not entered the path yet	Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha	Buddha
Solitary Realizers / those who have the Solitary Realizer inclination but who have not entered the path yet	Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha	Dharma
Hearers / those who have the Hearer inclination but who have not entered the path yet	Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha	Sangha

2. Identifying the nature (i.e. meaning) of the three objects of refuge

This category is subdivided into:

- The nature (i.e. meaning) of the three Jewels according to the Hearer Tenets (the Vaibashika and Sautantrika Tenets)
- The nature (i.e. meaning) of the three Jewels according to the Mahayana Tenets (the Chittamatra, Madhyamika Svatantrika, and Madhyamika Prasangika Tenets)

a) *The nature (meaning) of the three Jewels according to the Hearer Tenets (the Vaibashika and Sautantrika tenets)*

According to the proponents of the two Hearer tenets, the three Jewels refer to the Buddha Jewel, the Dharma Jewel, and the Sangha Jewel. However, they distinguish between the Buddha and the Buddha Jewel, and the Sangha and the Sangha Jewel, for they assert that the Buddha Jewel and the Sangha Jewel are paths and not persons. The Buddha Jewel refers to the *exalted wisdom that knows the extinction and non-production*, i.e. the mental consciousness of the Buddha. The proponents of the Hearer tenets do not call the Buddha's mental consciousness the *exalted knower of aspects* but the *exalted wisdom that knows the extinction and non-production* because even though it realizes all phenomena it does not realize them simultaneously. The reason for calling it such is that the Mahayana path of no more learning, i.e. the mental consciousness of the Buddha, is an exalted wisdom that knows the extinction and non-production of obstructions.

The Sangha Jewel refers to the *uncontaminated exalted wisdom* (i.e. wisdom that directly realizes selflessness) in the continua of learners and no-more-learners. In this context, learners who are Sangha Jewels are the *uncontaminated exalted wisdoms* of Arya Hearers, Solitary Realizer, and Bodhisattvas who are still on one of the two Arya learner paths – the path of seeing, or meditation.

No-more-learners who are Sangha Jewels are the *uncontaminated exalted wisdoms* of either Hearer or Solitary Realizer Arhats who have reached the Hearer or Solitary Realizers' path of no-more-learning. The Buddha's path of no-more-learning (i.e. *exalted wisdom that knows the extinction and non-production* of the Buddha) is not a Sangha Jewel because it is a Buddha Jewel.

The Dharma Jewel constitutes Nirvana, i.e. the cessation of afflictive obstructions and the cessation of cognitive obstructions.

Vasubhandu says in the fourth chapter of his *Treasury of Knowledge (Abhidharmakosha)*:

*Whoever goes for refuge to the three
Goes for refuge to the Dharma
That is taken to be the Buddha and the Sangha –
No-more-learning and both – and to Nirvana.*

The meaning of this verse is that according to the Hearer tenets, **whoever goes for refuge to the three Jewels**

- (1) **goes for refuge to the "Dharma that is taken to be the Buddha"** and that constitutes the path of **no-more-learning** in the continuum of the Buddha,
- (2) **goes for refuge to the "Dharma that is to be taken to be the Sangha"** and that constitutes **both**, the path of learning and the path of no-more-learning, and
- (3) **goes for refuge to the Dharma Jewel that is Nirvana.**

"Dharma that is taken to be the Buddha" refers to *the exalted wisdom that knows extinction and non-production*, i.e. the path of no-more-learning in the continuum of the Buddha. This exalted wisdom is not actually the Buddha but a Dharma that characterizes the Buddha. In other words, the Buddha is characterized by his mental consciousness – *the exalted wisdom that knows extinction and non-production* – because a person who possesses such a mental consciousness is a Buddha. This can be compared to a fully ordained monk who is characterized by his 253 vows and a novice monk who is characterized by his 36 vows.

"Dharma that is taken to be the Sangha" refers to the uncontaminated exalted wisdom, i.e. the wisdom that directly realizes selflessness, in the continua of both, learners and no-more-learners. This wisdom is not actually the Sangha but a Dharma that characterizes the Sangha because a person who has the uncontaminated exalted wisdom in his or her continuum is Sangha.

Buddha Jewel	Dharma Jewel	Sangha Jewel
The <i>exalted wisdom that knows the extinction and non-production</i> , i.e. the mental consciousness of the Buddha	Nirvana, i.e. the cessation of afflictive obstructions and the cessation of cognitive obstructions	<i>Uncontaminated exalted wisdom</i> , i.e. wisdom that directly realizes selflessness, in the continua of learners and Hearer and Solitary Realizer no-more-learners

According to the Hearer tenets, the Buddha himself is not a Buddha Jewel because his body is impure. The Buddha's body is impure because it is the result of ignorance and afflictions, and therefore a *truth of suffering*. The Buddha's body is a *truth of suffering* because it is a continuation of the body of a Bodhisattva that is also a *truth of suffering*.

The reason for this assertion is that the proponents of the Hearer tenets take the life story of Buddha Shakyamuni literally in that they assert that the Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree and that prior to that he was a Bodhisattva whose ordinary body was the result of ignorance and afflictions.

Proponents of the Mahayana tenets do not accept this, for according to them Shakyamuni Buddha was a supreme emanation body and therefore already enlightened when he took birth as prince Siddhartha.